

NEWS RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS ANNOUNCES CONSUMER PROTECTIONS FROM PREDATORY TOWING

INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard and City-County Council President Ryan Vaughn today announced details of a proposed city ordinance to protect consumers from predatory towing practices in Indianapolis.

“For too long drivers have been at the mercy of tow truck operators in our city,” said Mayor Ballard. “The ordinance that Council President Vaughn will introduce in the coming weeks will provide basic consumer protections so people can recover their vehicle safely in a timely manner and with the knowledge they won’t be charged excessive fees.”

The proposed ordinance will provide these basic protections:

- Towing fees for passenger vehicles capped at \$150. Storage fees capped at \$30 per day
- Detailed receipts listing all charges must be provided
- Prohibits payments from tow operators to property owners/lot managers per vehicle towed
- Signs listing lot hours and vehicle redemption information must be approved by the City
- Vehicles must be towed directly to secure storage lot inside Marion County, unless within 10 miles of pick up
- Motorists must be able to claim their vehicle 24 hours per day, seven days a week
- Towing operators and their storage lots must accept cash or credit cards
- Representative of property owner must sign tow order for each vehicle prior to towing

“I have been working with business groups, tow truck operators and concerned citizens for months on this issue and it seems reasonable the city outline basic minimum standards for any company that tows vehicles in our city without the vehicle owner’s consent,” said Council President Vaughn.

The proposal requires the Indianapolis Department of Code Enforcement to license all operators who perform non-consensual towing in Indianapolis or contract with the City for towing services. The licensing procedure will require proof of insurance to protect motorists in the event of vehicle damage, criminal background checks of all tow truck operators, and secure storage lots. The ordinance would not apply to operators that only tow with the vehicle owner’s consent, such as service stations.

Council President Vaughn plans to introduce the measure before the City-County Council at the full Council meeting scheduled for June 6, 2011.

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